British Columbia
French Immersion
Assessment

FCG 123

1988

Provincial Report

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION

Province of British Columbia

SECTION ASSESSMENT

1988 B.C. French Immersion Assessment Provincial Report

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91-01459/

Canadian Cataloguing in Publication Data

Main entry under title:
1988 B.C. French immersion assessment provincial report

Cover title: British Columbia French immersion assessment.
ISBN 0-7726-1050-9

1. French language - Study and teaching - British Columbia - English speakers - Evaluation. 2. Curriculum evaluation - British Columbia. I. British Columbia. Student Assessment Branch. II. Title: French immersion assessment provincial report. III. Title: British Columbia French immersion assessment.

PC2068.C3N56 1989 372.65'41'09711 C90-092018-1

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PART 1 OVERVIEW

HIGHLIGHTS

B.C. students express very positive opinions about their French Immersion programs and they demonstrate a beginning proficiency with the French language. The following are some of the main findings of the Assessment:

Grade 7 Writing

- About 9 out of 10 students can write a short composition with some detail, organization, and originality.
- In spite of their short time in French Immersion, it appears that Late Immersion students learn quickly to write in French.
- Immersion students receive higher scores than Francophone students from Quebec on punctuation and sentence enrichment.
- Spelling causes the greatest difficulty for students.
- Vocabulary usage is the most noticeable difference between the writing of Immersion students and that of native French speakers.

Grade 10 Reading, Listening, and Speaking

- When reading, 8 out of 10 students can grasp information which is explicitly stated and are able to make inferences. Approximately 7 out of 10 students can make judgements about what is read.
- Nine out of ten students can listen to a series of words each presented in the context of a sentence and from a choice of drawings correctly identify all of them.
- The students' speech in French is characterized by certain English traits, but it is clear and comprehensible.
- Four out of ten students achieve full points for pronunciation.
- Early Immersion students have better listening and speaking results than Late Immersion students. Reading results are similar for the two streams.
- Female students read better than male students. There are no notable gender differences for listening and speaking performances.

- The overall reading performance of B.C. students is somewhat lower than that of Francophone students (approximately 10%). Their listening and speaking performances are considerably lower than that of Francophone students.

Student Attitudes and Background

- Seven out of ten Grade 7 students, and eight out of ten Grade 10 students gave very high ratings to the value of studying French. Students report positive attitudes about French Immersion programs.

- Most students do not use French outside of the classroom. Approximately 7 out of 10 students report little to no opportunity to speak French outside of the classroom.

- Grade 7 students who spell well have more confidence in their French.

- Grade 10 students who have good listening vocabularies have more confidence in their French.

- Grade 10 Early Immersion students are more confident about their French than are Late Immersion students.

- More than 9 out of 10 of all Immersion students intend to go to university.

Teachers and Administrators

- The amount of time students spend in French varies from as little as 20% to as much as 100% of class time.

- Almost 2 out of 10 elementary principals and none of the secondary principals surveyed consider themselves to be fluent in the French language.

- There is a larger proportion of resource personnel and learning assistance teachers who can use French at the elementary level than at the secondary level.

- Teachers and administrators are most satisfied with student performance and attitudes, curriculum balance and content, staff relationships and competence, and communication with parents.

- Teachers and administrators are most dissatisfied with the French language learning resources available, the provision of extra-curricular activities in French for students, and in-service training on French Immersion programs for staff.

PROCEDURES

In May 1988, an evaluation of French Immersion classes in B.C. was undertaken as part of the Provincial Learning Assessment Program. Students were assessed for writing performance at Grade 7 and for reading, listening, and speaking performances at Grade 10. A previous Assessment undertaken in 1987 evaluated reading at Grade 4 and reading, listening, and speaking at Grade 7. Appendix A provides a brief summary of these earlier results.

There are two separate French Immersion streams. Early Immersion consists of those children who generally entered French Immersion at kindergarten or Grade 1, and Late Immersion is made up of students generally beginning French Immersion at Grade 6. Both programs were included in the Assessment, allowing for comparisons between students with differing amounts of exposure to French. The 1988 French Immersion Assessment was designed to investigate the following questions:

- To what extent are students in Grades 7 and 10 French Immersion programs achieving the goals and objectives of the Language Arts component of the programs?
- What are the competencies in French Language Arts of students in Grades 7 and 10 Immersion programs?
- What attitudes do French Immersion students hold toward French Immersion programs?
- What are the characteristics of students in French Immersion programs?
- How do teachers and administrators feel about the French Immersion programs and the instructional materials available?
- What recommendations are suggested by the collected information?

To answer these questions, a three-pronged approach was undertaken (see Figure 1 on the next page). The major thrust was to assess achievement, attitudes and background characteristics of all students in B.C. French Immersion programs in Grades 7 and 10. Secondly, a comparison was made to a group of Quebec Francophone students. The third aspect of the Assessment involved a survey of B.C. French Immersion teachers and program administrators to tap information pertaining to program and resource issues. A detailed description of procedures is presented in Appendix B.

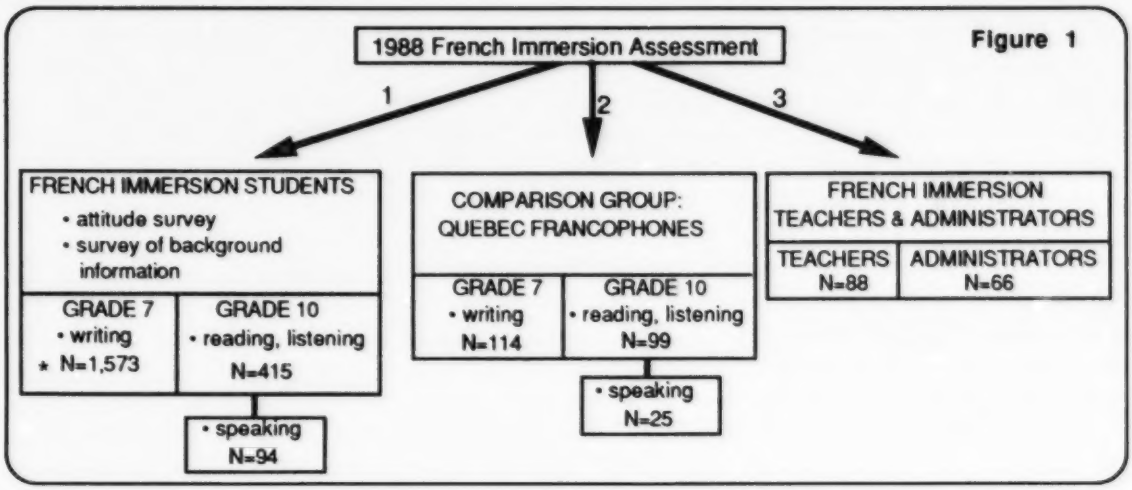


Figure 1

* N equals the number of participants.

To interpret achievement results in terms of curriculum goals and objectives, Interpretation Panels of parents, teachers, administrators, and trustees rated the results of student achievement based on their expectations of student performance. The resulting categories of student achievement are described in Part 2 and Part 3 of the report in terms of what students can do. **The descriptors of what the students can do for each area of the Assessment provide the clearest definition of each achievement category.**

For Grade 7, results for Early and Late Immersion students were rated separately. These ratings reflect the different expectations of teachers for the Early Immersion and Late Immersion programs. For Grade 10, only one set of ratings was obtained because students from Early and Late Immersion programs are combined into a single program at the junior-secondary level.

PART 2 GRADE 7 WRITING ASSESSMENT

OVERVIEW OF THE WRITING ASSESSMENT

The Grade 7 Assessment of written French focused on three distinct skills: spelling, verb usage, and sentence construction were each individually assessed with at least one set of questions. Each skill was divided into two or three sub-scales as outlined in the following table. Furthermore, two composition tasks incorporated all of these skills, providing more general feedback on expression in written French. The writing tasks are described in more detail in Appendix B.

SKILL	SUB-SCALE	ASSESSMENT GOAL
Spelling	• grammatical spelling	✔ spell those words that vary according to grammatical rules of context
	• semantic spelling	✔ spell those words that, once the meaning is identified, have unchanging spellings
Verb Usage	• verb conjugation	✔ use correct verb and ending to ensure actor/action agreement
	• verb tense	✔ use tense (e.g. past, present, future) as required by context
	• verb form	✔ use correct verb ending to ensure actor/action agreement
Sentence Construction	• sentence completion • sentence enrichment	✔ construct complete sentences and elaborate on a simple sentence
Composition	• paragraph • cartoon phrasing	✔ construct passages, synthesizing all writing skills into a complete product

Since the results for Early and Late Immersion students were quite similar, they have been combined into a single presentation in the following pages. Comparisons across programs are provided beginning on page 10.

WRITING

Spelling, Verb Usage, and Sentence Construction

As shown below, 77% of the students' achievement fits into the three highest achievement categories on the following tasks:

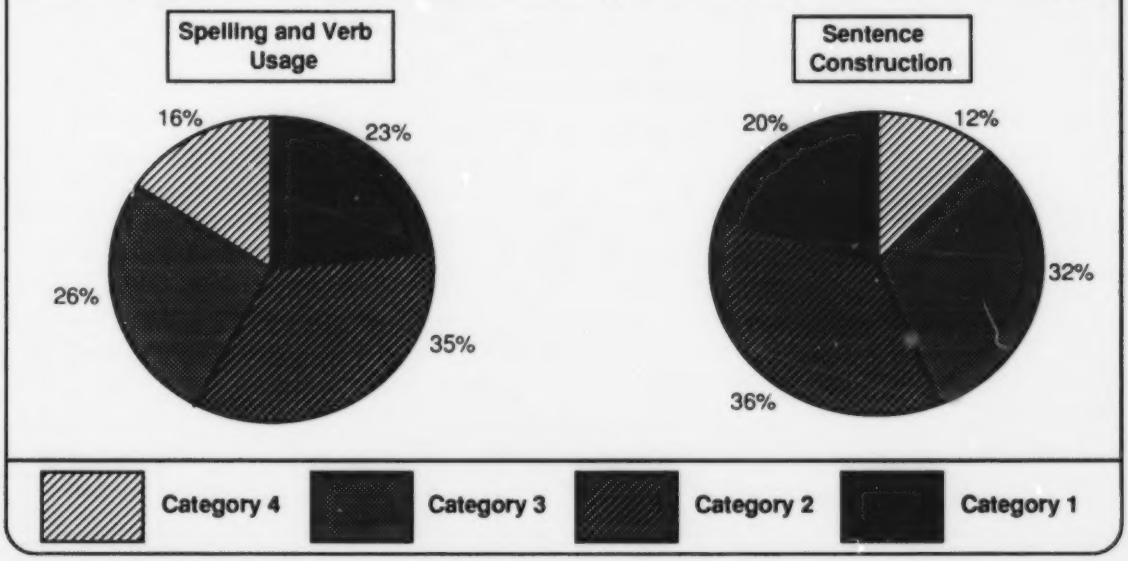
- spell specific words in context
- use specified verbs in sentences

For sentence enrichment and sentence completion, 80% of the students' achievement fits into the three highest achievement categories.

For verb conjugation, students had more success in selecting the proper tense for the verb than in writing the correct subject-verb agreement. Students found it easier to add descriptive adjectives and adverbs to a sentence provided for them than to construct their own sentences.

Overview of the Grade 7 Assessment Results
% of Students by Achievement Category

Figure 2



See the next two pages for the descriptors for each achievement category.

Spelling and Verb Usage Achievement Categories

The following table shows the percentage of students for each achievement category and what each of these groups of students can do.

Students can also do everything listed above their own category.

Achievement Category 1 23%	In the context of a dictée, students can spell some high-frequency words that have only one form and also words that are spelled similarly in English.
Achievement Category 2 35%	Students can spell many high-frequency words with invariable spellings in the context of a dictée. Students can conjugate some verbs in the present tense and most high-frequency verbs in the passé composé.
Achievement Category 3 26%	Students can spell many regular and irregular verbs in the present tense in the context of a dictée. Students can conjugate verbs in the present and some verbs in the imparfait.
Achievement Category 4 16%	Students can spell the following types of words in the context of a dictée: • past and present verb forms. • words which require conventional agreement for masculine/feminine and singular/plural. • complex words such as qu'est-ce qui. Students can conjugate verbs in the passé composé, futur simple, and imparfait.

Sentence Construction Achievement Categories

The following table shows the percentage of students for each achievement category and what each of these groups of students can do.

Students can also add descriptive words to answer the questions listed above their own category.

Achievement Category 1 20%	Students can sometimes write a complete sentence of eight to ten words with three or more errors.
Achievement Category 2 36%	Students write complete sentences of eight to ten words with two or more errors. Students add descriptive words with few errors to a sentence to answer the questions when, where, with whom, and to whom.
Achievement Category 3 32%	Students write complete sentences of eight to ten words with at least one error. Students add descriptive words with no more than one error to a sentence to answer the questions from where and why.
Achievement Category 4 12%	Students write complete sentences of eight to ten words with no more than one error. Students add descriptive words with no more than one error to a sentence to answer the questions when, how, and what kind.

Composition Achievement Categories

For the Grade 7 compositions, teachers assigned ratings of 0 to 5 to the students' paragraphs and cartoons for a number of attributes: content, vocabulary, sentence structure, punctuation, and spelling. The type of writing that is characteristic of the scale points is described below. The percentage of the students whose compositions fit into each achievement category is shown to the left of each set of descriptors.

0 and 1:

12%

For those students who attempted the task, the composition is off topic or unclear. The sentences are simple and the vocabulary is limited and repetitive. There are several Anglicisms and numerous grammatical errors.

2 and 3:

49%

The topic is approached in some detail. The composition has some organization with one or two ideas. It has a certain originality and includes a few interesting details. The sentences may be somewhat varied and complex with some Anglicisms, or they may be simple and correct. The vocabulary may be somewhat descriptive and original with several Anglicisms or weak and repetitive with few Anglicisms. There are several grammatical errors.

4 and 5:

39%

The topic is dealt with in a well-organized manner with interesting ideas that are expressed with originality and supported by details. The student shows a good understanding of the structure of the French language by using complex sentences or by using inversion of subject pronoun and verb in questions and also relative pronouns such as dont and auquel. The vocabulary is precise, descriptive, and original. There are few errors or Anglicisms.

Students received high ratings for the content of their compositions which shows that they can express their ideas in French. Other areas of strength are punctuation, sentence structure, and vocabulary.

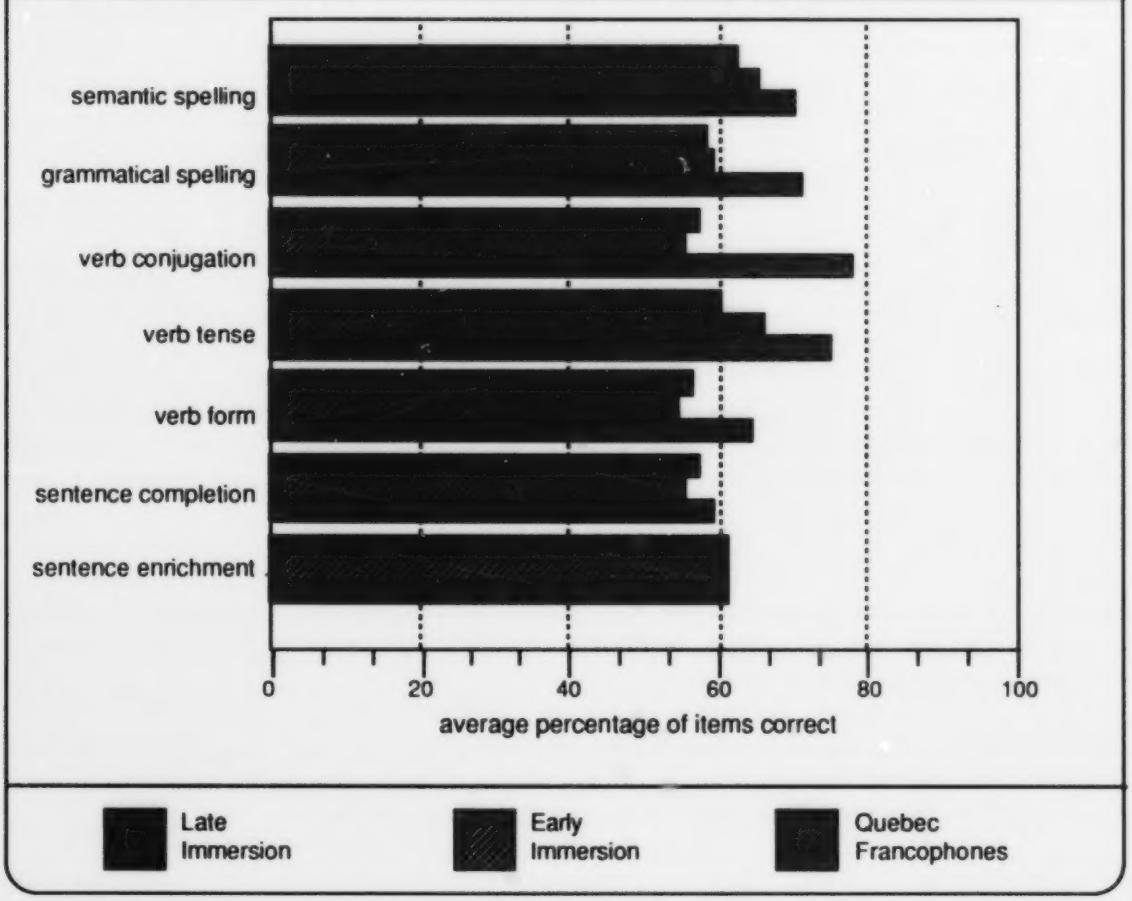
Students did better on verb usage in the cartoon phrasing than they did when they had to conjugate an assigned verb. When students have the opportunity to choose the verbs that they use, they can use them correctly more often.

COMPARISONS BETWEEN STUDENTS IN EARLY AND LATE IMMERSION

Early and Late Immersion students perform equally well on the Writing Assessment. Not only are their strengths and weaknesses in the same areas, but their average scores are so close in most of the skill areas as to be effectively equivalent. This represents a different trend from that evidenced in the 1987 Assessment of reading, listening, and speaking. In 1987, the achievement of Early Immersion students was consistently higher than that of Late Immersion students. In general, the Quebec students, who are native French speakers, attain higher scores than the B.C. students. The following graph shows these comparisons for each of the writing scales.

Grade 7 Writing Performance:
Quebec, Early Immersion, Late Immersion
Comparison of Average Performances on Writing Sub-scales

Figure 3



On semantic spelling and verb tense, the mean performance of Early Immersion students is slightly higher than that for Late Immersion students. On the other hand, Late Immersion students attain higher scores than Early Immersion students on verb conjugation, verb form, and sentence completion.

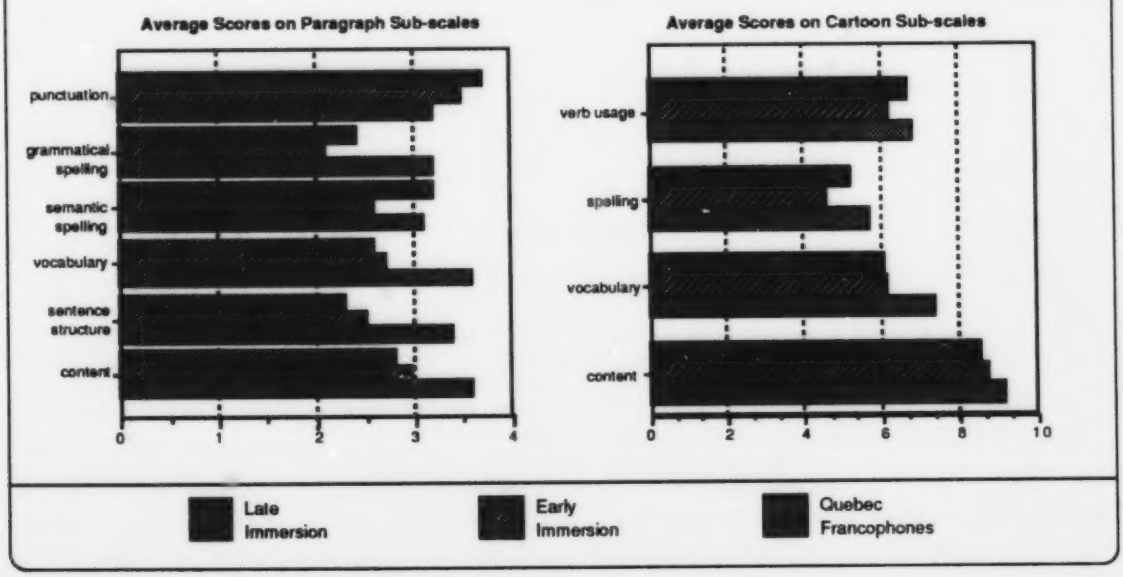
In comparison with the Quebec sample, the British Columbia Immersion groups are significantly weaker in the spelling and verb usage categories. The Quebec students' more intimate knowledge of French appears to help them to retain the more exact details required for these tasks. Longer familiarity through French Immersion does not appear to have the same effect.

For sentence construction, the mean scores of all three groups are very similar. The requirements for these tasks are less structured, allowing the B.C. students to more easily provide adequate responses. Students had some freedom to choose vocabulary that was familiar to them.

Those tasks that combined writing skills into overall expression highlight a difference between Early and Late Immersion students which is shown in the chart below. On a breakdown of the marks given for composing a paragraph and phrases to accompany cartoon strips, Early Immersion students score higher on those items which reflect familiarity with French (content, sentence structure, and vocabulary). The differences for the cartoon are very small. Late Immersion students achieve higher scores for spelling, punctuation, and verb usage, which are mechanical skills.

Grade 7 Writing Performance:
Quebec, Early Immersion, Late Immersion
Comparisons on Compositions

Figure 4



When students are given more interesting tasks with a greater latitude to use the French language freely, they seem to do better. When students are faced with a more natural linguistic context, they can avail themselves of their acquired knowledge of French verbs and vocabulary. They are able to use French under these circumstances with higher accuracy than within more restrictive contexts.

When the long exposure of Quebec students to French is considered, the overall written expression of B.C. students compares well to that of the Quebec students. In those areas where the Early Immersion students are strongest, Quebec Francophone students excel by a wide margin. These differences suggest an advantage of increased familiarity with French for some writing skills. On the other hand, in those areas where the Late Immersion students are strongest, they approach and, for spelling and punctuation in the context of a written paragraph, exceed the performance of the Quebec students. In spite of their short term in French Immersion, it appears that Late Immersion students learn quickly to write in French.

In general, the Quebec students seemed to provide more expressive and vivid language elements. Ongoing contact with an authentic and linguistically enriching milieu apparently generates an enriched acquisition of the French language. French Immersion students make certain kinds of errors that their Quebec counterparts do not make, or make much less frequently. Some examples of mistakes in written expression made by the French Immersion students are listed below:

- gender errors (confusion of le and la);
- preposition errors (incorrect use of de, à, pour, etc.);
- transfer from English syntax and vocabulary (une voiture d'espace for soucoupe volante);
- paucity of fixed expressions such as: il s'agit de, faire face à;
- creation of new verb forms (elle a ouvré for elle a ouvert);
- inability to vary verb system to any great extent and inability to maintain consistent verb tenses and verb agreement throughout a composition;
- omission of direct or indirect objects (ils ont fermé for ils l'ont fermée);
- confusion of direct, indirect, and pronominal object pronouns (ils leur protègent for ils se protègent);
- over-generalization of French word formation: (les villageurs for les villageois);
- infrequent examples of possessive pronouns (le mien, la sienne) or demonstrative pronouns (celle-ci, celui-là).

Clearly, the Quebec students' early, consistent, and ongoing contact with the French language provides an important exposure to the language which the B.C. linguistic environment does not. In B.C., an Immersion environment represents the sole contact with the French language for most students. So, B.C. students do not experience the same wide exposure to the French language as do native speakers.

PART 3 GRADE 10 READING, LISTENING, AND SPEAKING ASSESSMENT

OVERVIEW OF THE GRADE 10 ASSESSMENT

By Grade 10, Early and Late Immersion students are assimilated into the same classes; therefore, the overall assessment results have been combined. They are reported by the target skills outlined below.

SKILL	SUB-SCALE	ASSESSMENT GOAL
Reading	• literal • inferential • critical	✔ grasp information which is explicitly stated ✔ interpret meaning implicit in what is read ✔ evaluate or judge what is read
Listening	• vocabulary • semantics • following directions • comprehension	✔ understand isolated words ✔ understand words in the context of a sentence ✔ understand words in a context requiring simple actions in response ✔ understand complete passages
Speaking	• communication • personal opinion	✔ give a description and a narration ✔ present and defend an opinion

Performance on the reading, listening, and speaking sub-scales was rated according to category of performance from Achievement Category 4 to Achievement Category 1. The overall achievement results for reading, listening, and speaking are summarized on the following pages. The results are similar for the three areas. A small percentage of the students achieve high scores, and a small percentage achieve low scores. The Interpretation Panel for the Assessment felt that the large percentage of high scores in speaking reflects a somewhat generous marking protocol.

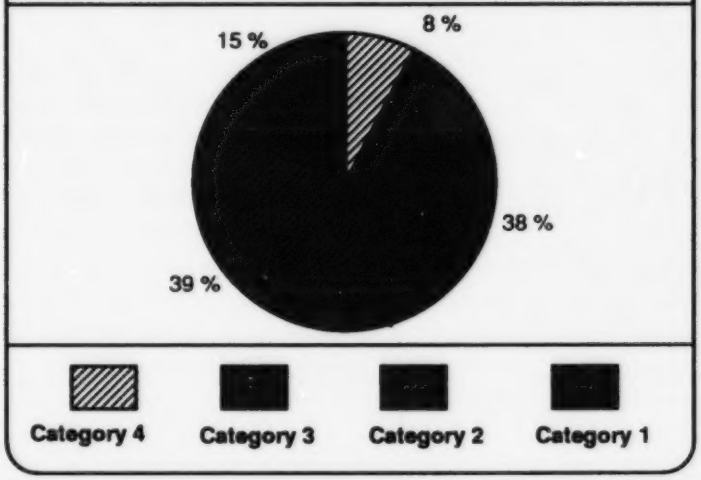
Of the three language arts areas, only reading performance shows a gender difference. Female students read slightly better in French than do male students.

READING

Reading performance has been broken down into three levels of comprehension as described in B.C. curriculum guides: explicit understanding or "literal" comprehension, interpretive or "inferential" comprehension, and evaluative or "critical" comprehension. Student performance on these three types of reading tasks is shown in the descriptors of student achievement.

Grade 10 Reading Performance
% of Students by Achievement Category

Figure 5



See the following page for the descriptors of what the students can do for each achievement category.

Achievement Categories for Reading

The table below shows the percentage of the students for each achievement category and what each of these groups of students can do.

Students can also do everything listed above their own category.

Students can read a variety of short prose passages and poems and answer questions as described below for each achievement category:

Achievement Category 1
15%

- answer a few questions on explicitly stated information.
- infer the topic of a poem.
- identify a short story as being a fantasy.

Achievement Category 2
39%

- answer most questions on explicitly stated information.
- understand the main idea of a paragraph.
- recognize reworded literal meanings.
- identify cause and effect.
- infer differences between two settings and infer the meaning of a poetic metaphor.

Achievement Category 3
38%

- answer the vast majority of questions on explicitly stated information.
- understand character motivation when it is clearly portrayed.
- infer the main idea of a short essay, probable cause of stated events, and personification in a poem.

Achievement Category 4
8%

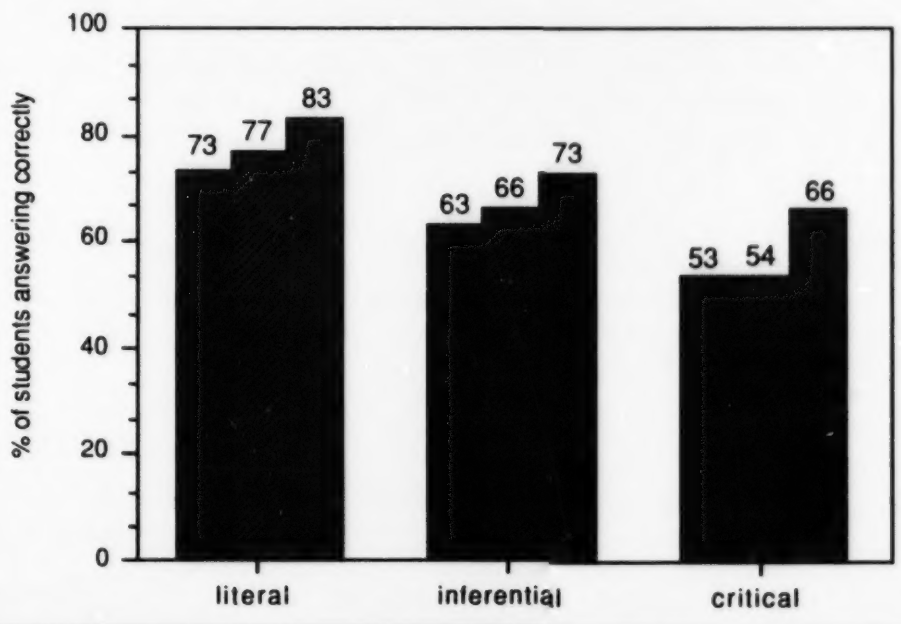
- answer all questions on explicitly stated information.
- infer author's message, subtle nuances in synonyms, and the reference point of a simile.
- classify images described in a poem.
- recognize underlying theme.
- understand unstated suggestions.
- differentiate between different kinds of writing such as descriptive, satirical, symbolic, and narrative.

Not surprisingly, performance is best in the area of literal comprehension which is considered to be the most fundamental reading ability. Most students can understand the basic information in the French reading material. Substantially fewer students achieve high scores on the inferential questions, suggesting a need for more experience dealing with interpretation and analysis of what has been read. Questions pertaining to critical comprehension are the most difficult and show the widest spread of scores.

The reading performance of Late Immersion students is not significantly different from that of Early Immersion students. Both compare very well to the scores of Quebec Francophone students. Although the Quebec students achieve higher scores, they are not so much higher that the Immersion results might be considered inadequate.

Grade 10 Reading Performances
Comparison of Early Immersion, Late Immersion & Quebec Francophones

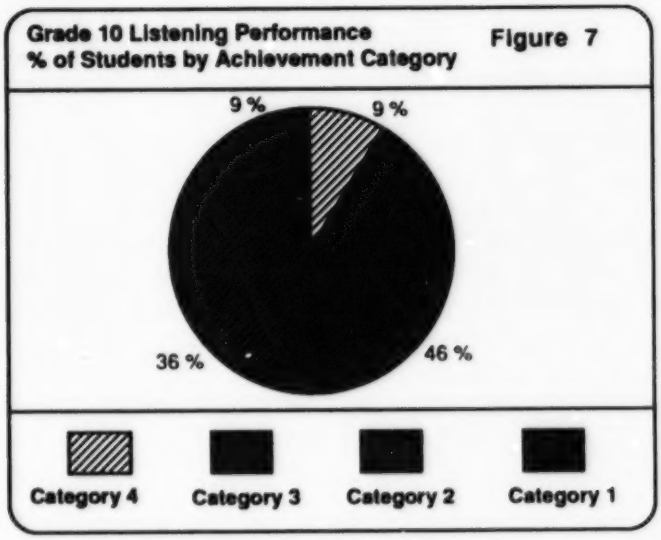
Figure 6



The largest difference between B.C. and Quebec students occurs with critical comprehension. It is reasonable that students in French Immersion, having less familiarity with French, have more difficulty with abstract questions.

LISTENING

Immersion students seem to understand spoken French better if at least a few words are given to help provide meaning from the context, and if the length of the presentation is short (one or two sentences). The most positive results were obtained for following directions and understanding complete sentences (semantics). Understanding single words given in the vocabulary exercises was more difficult. Understanding full passages was the most difficult of the listening scales. Students appear to make effective use of the context of a word in order to improve their listening comprehension of complete sentences.



Achievement Categories for Listening

Students can also do everything listed above their own category.

See below and on the following page for the descriptors of what the students can do and the percentage of the students for each achievement category.

Achievement Category 1

9%

- listen to a series of isolated nouns and from a choice of drawings identify a small number of common concrete nouns correctly.
- listen to a series of words in the context of a sentence and from a choice of drawings identify most of them correctly.
- listen to a series of simple directions to be carried out with pencil and paper and perform very few of them successfully.
- listen to a series of short passages recorded from French Canadian radio and answer correctly very few simple questions to test understanding such as identify the season during which a weather announcement was recorded and recognize the time that a show is to start from a publicity announcement.

Achievement Category 2

36%

- listen to a series of isolated nouns and from a choice of drawings identify half of the nouns correctly (mostly high-frequency, concrete nouns).
- listen to a series of words in the context of a sentence and from a choice of drawings identify all of them correctly.
- listen to a series of simple directions to be carried out with pencil and paper and perform a few of them successfully.
- listen to a series of short passages recorded from French Canadian radio and answer correctly about a third of the questions to test understanding (the questions tend to be asked in a slight rewording of the original passage).

Achievement Category 3

46%

- listen to a series of isolated nouns and from a choice of drawings identify just about all of the nouns correctly (including a number of difficult, abstract nouns).
- listen to a series of simple directions to be carried out with pencil and paper and perform just about all of them successfully.
- listen to a series of short passages recorded from French Canadian radio and answer correctly slightly more than half of the questions to test understanding (these questions tend to be among the longer ones and many of them are asked in a rewording of the original passage).

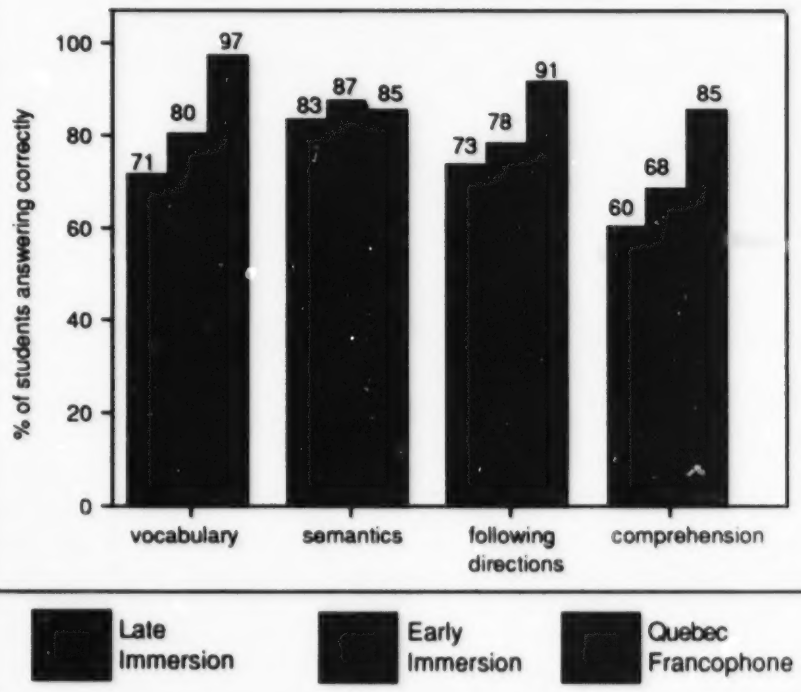
Achievement Category 4

9%

- listen to a series of isolated nouns and from a choice of drawings identify all of the nouns correctly.
- listen to a series of simple directions to be carried out with pencil and paper and perform all of them successfully.
- listen to a series of short passages recorded from French Canadian radio and answer correctly all of the questions to test understanding (including questions that are long, complex, and require a lengthy period of concentration).

Figure 8

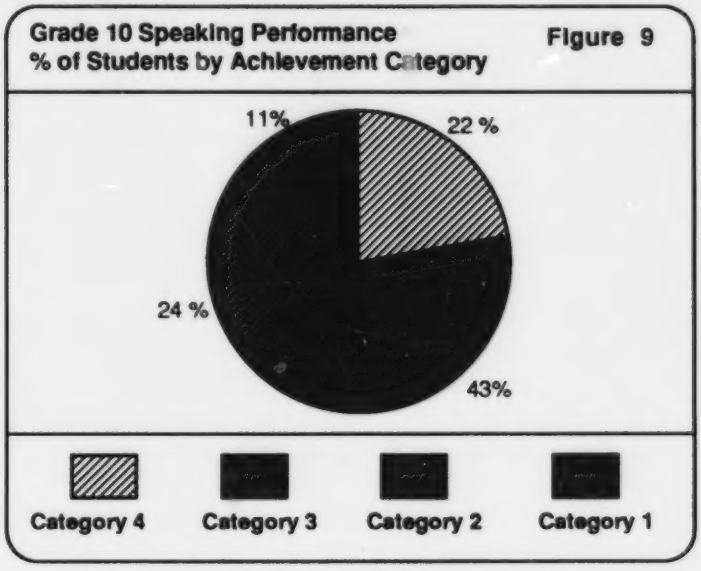
Grade 10 Listening Performances: Comparison of Early Immersion, Late Immersion & Quebec Francophones



Students who have spent the most time in a French environment do best on the listening measures. The semantics sub-scale is the only one with no significant differences among the results of all three groups. On the other three scales, Quebec students achieve higher results than Early Immersion students, and Early Immersion students achieve higher results than Late Immersion students.

SPEAKING

Two oral tasks were used to assess French speaking ability at Grade 10. In one task, students were asked to express an opinion. In the other, students were asked to describe events in a picture. A greater number of students achieved higher scores for the opinion-giving exercise than for communicating a description.



See the following page for the descriptors of what the students can do for each achievement category.

Achievement Categories for Speaking

The students' speech was characterized as follows for the four achievement categories. The percentage of the students for each achievement category is listed to the left of each set of descriptors.

Achievement Category 1

11%

- the speaking tasks are attempted, but vocabulary is limited and repetitive with a few descriptive words and many errors and Anglicisms.
- verbs are usually confined to the present tense.
- speech is confusing and pronunciation is rarely clear.

Achievement Category 2

24%

- vocabulary is sometimes appropriate with several errors and Anglicisms.
- moderate variety of verbs and tenses with frequent errors.
- organization and pronunciation are sometimes coherent and clear.

Achievement Category 3

43%

- vocabulary is usually appropriate with occasional errors and Anglicisms.
- moderate variety of verbs and tenses with few errors.
- often coherent organization and usually clear pronunciation.

Achievement Category 4

22%

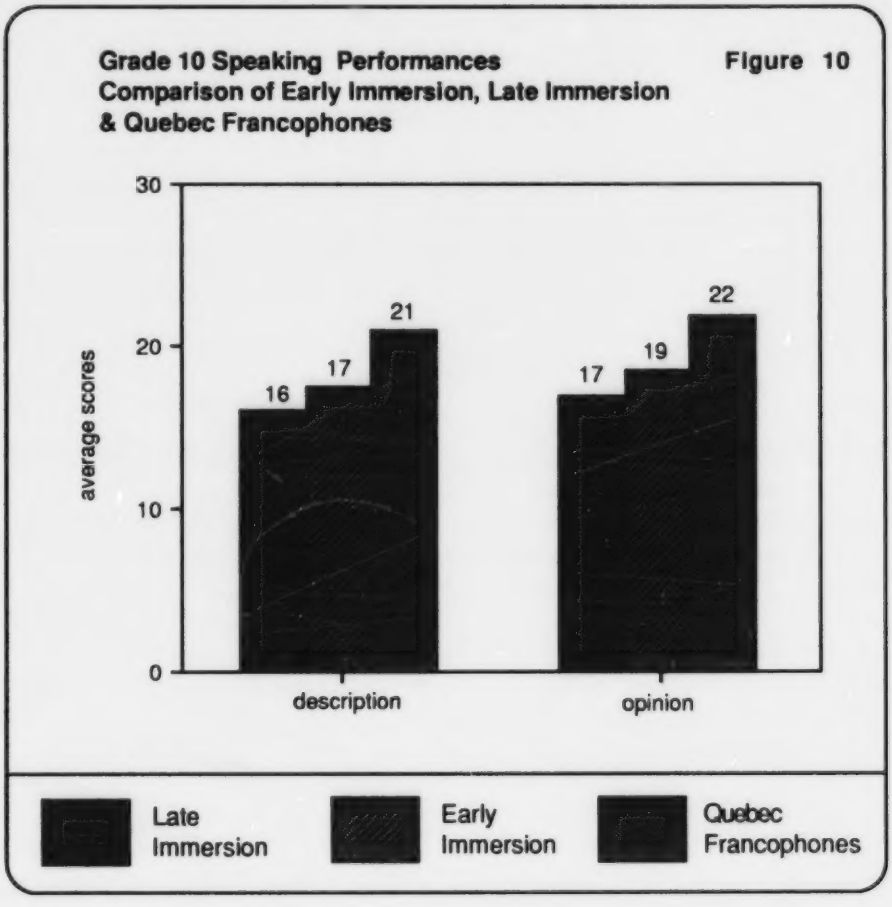
- wide variety of verbs, tenses, and vocabulary with few errors and few Anglicisms.
- coherent organization and clear pronunciation.

Analysis of the eight sub-scales used to score the Speaking Assessment shows that pronunciation and use of varied tenses are the areas of strength. The spoken French of the Grade 10 Immersion students is characterized by some interference and confusion along with certain non-native traits, but it is comprehensible and operational.

Differences were evident between Immersion and Quebec students. Without exception, the Quebec group scored significantly higher in all speaking test variables. The B.C. Immersion students are more comparable to their Quebec counterparts on the communicative measures of oral proficiency, such as their ability to sustain oral communication in French on various subjects and to organize their information in a comprehensible manner. However, they are not as proficient in the linguistic aspects of their speech. The following graph shows the resulting differences in overall scores for the two speaking tasks.

Grade 10 Speaking Performances
Comparison of Early Immersion, Late Immersion & Quebec Francophones

Figure 10



The open-ended nature of the speaking tasks makes them sensitive discriminators between native and non-native speakers. These results are consistent with other Canadian findings that report that students enrolled in Immersion programs can score as well as their Francophone peers on a number of measures, but they are rarely mistaken for native speakers. The B.C. students do not sustain oral communications in the same manner as the Quebec group. The pauses, for example, do not contain oral links or joiners such as bon, bien, pis là, and tu sais.

In comparison to the Grade 7 errors found in 1987, the Grade 10 Immersion students continue to make the same or similar types of errors:

- gender errors (confusion of le or la);
- gender errors with possessive adjectives (mon, ta, son);
- substitution of the possessive adjective for the possessive pronoun ("C'est mon." for "C'est le mien.");
- interference from English;
- omission of the third person plural of the present tense (students say "il boit, il sort, il part" for "ils boivent, ils sortent, ils partent");
- omission of object pronouns or incorrect order for object pronouns. ("J'ai vu lui." and "Je mettais le dans mon pupitre." for " Je l'ai vu." and "Je le mettais dans mon pupitre.");
- omission of reflexive pronouns ("je **me** lave, je **me** repose");
- a simplified verb system: past-present-future; infrequent use of the conditional or subjunctive moods.

SUMMARY OF COMPARISONS BETWEEN EARLY AND LATE IMMERSION

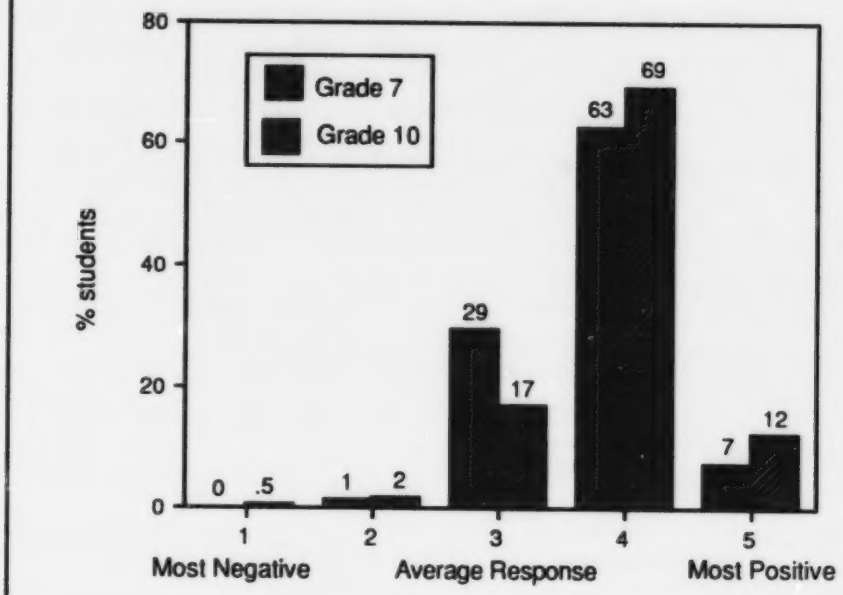
Contrary to the Grade 7 results in 1987, Late Immersion students at Grade 10 read in French as well as Early Immersion students. Achievement in writing was very similar for Grade 7 students in the two programs. Early Immersion students, however, seem to benefit from their longer exposure to French in the listening and speaking areas. While students can develop competence in reading and writing fairly quickly, it would appear that a longer period of exposure to French is required for the development of competence in speaking and listening.

PART 4 HOW STUDENTS FEEL ABOUT FRENCH IMMERSION PROGRAMS

ATTITUDES

In general, students expressed favorable attitudes toward the French language and French Immersion programs. Most students place a high value on studying French. Students responded to seven statements concerning the benefits of studying French. The average response out of five was computed for each student. The following graph shows the percentage of students receiving each average.

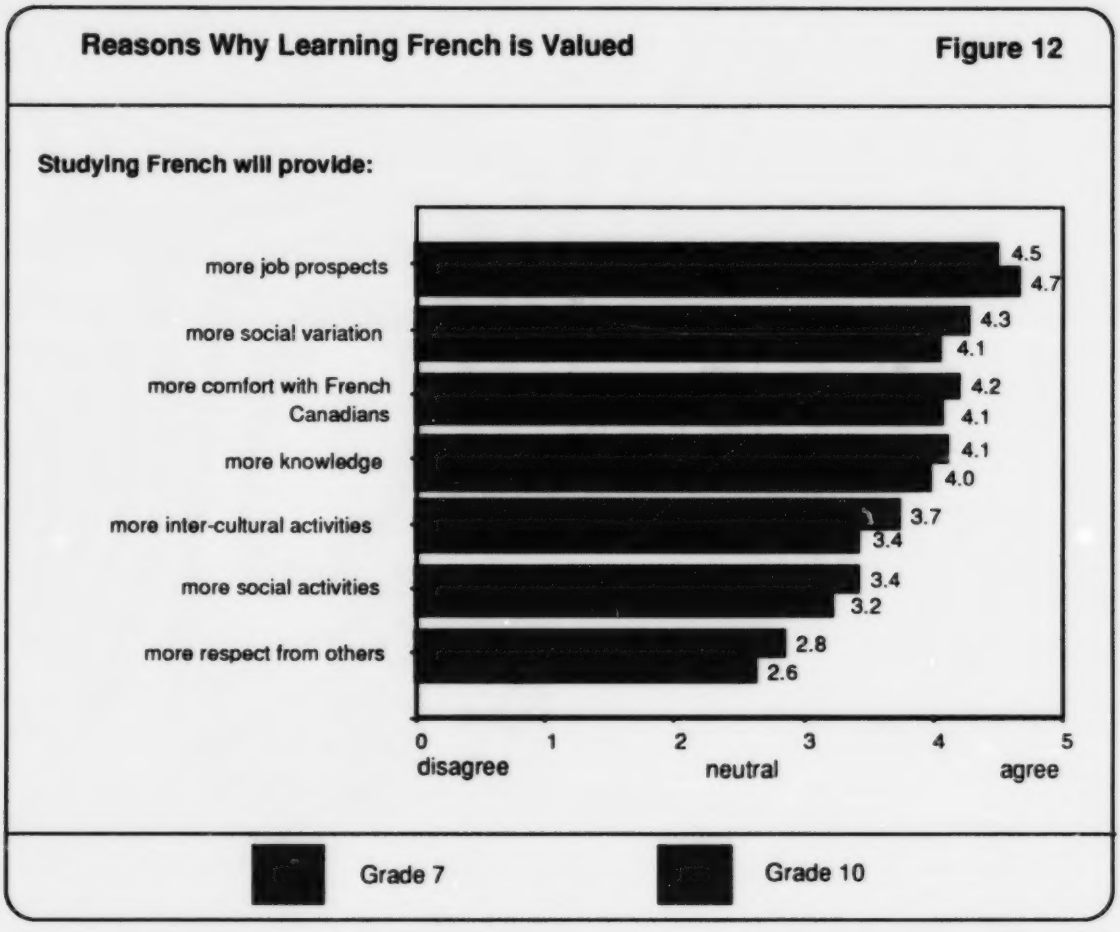
Overall Value Attributed to Learning French **Figure 11**



Over 90% of the students feel that studying French will help them to get a good job. Approximately 85% of the students feel that studying French will help them to be more at ease with fellow Canadians who speak French and will allow them to meet a more diverse group of people. When asked to express an opinion about French Immersion, many students mentioned cultural benefits, educational challenge, and perceived financial benefits.

As shown in the following graph, responses and comments about why students enrol in French Immersion were similar for the two grade levels. A perceived financial advantage of being bilingual was the strongest reason given for wanting to learn French.

Reasons Why Learning French is Valued **Figure 12**

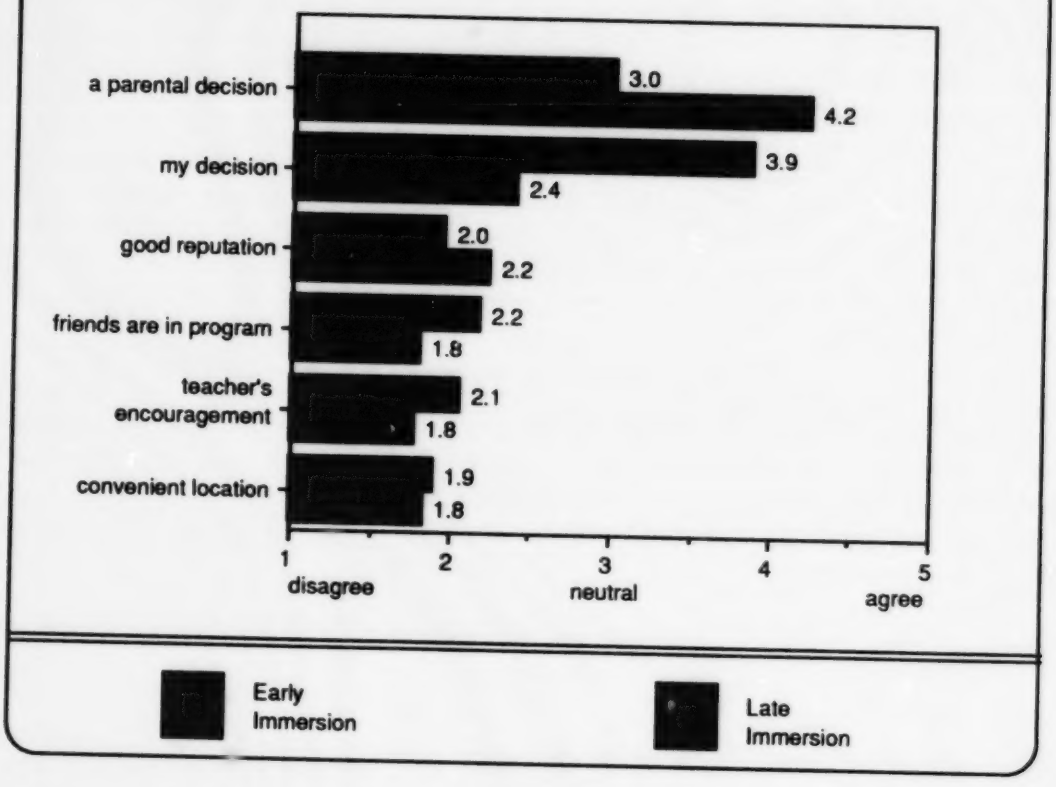


Most students have never considered dropping out of French Immersion (61.6%), do not feel they are disadvantaged by French Immersion (71.8%), praised programs and teachers, and provided no negative comments. Those who did, reported a concern over program difficulty and workloads and felt their skills in English Language Arts and some other subjects suffered from less attention. Some Grade 10 students noted a lack of electives and extra-curricular activities in French Immersion and made negative comparisons of secondary teachers to elementary teachers. Finally, a few students reported feeling different from mainstream students or having difficulty in making friends outside the confines of French Immersion.

MOTIVATION

The decision to participate in French Immersion rests more with the students and their parents than with other factors, such as having friends in the program and the location or reputation of the school.

Reasons Cited by Students for their Enrolment in French Immersion Programs — **Figure 13**



As could be expected, parents had more responsibility for the decision to participate in Early Immersion than in Late. Also, at the Grade 7 level, students feel that their parents try to help them more than at Grade 10. The majority of students indicate that their parents encourage them to practise French and stress the importance that French will have for them when they leave school.

Although students are motivated to participate in French Immersion programs by a perception of general future benefits, their specific plans for exploiting such benefits are not clear. The majority of students feel that they would use French in the future; however, the majority do not intend to live in a French-speaking area. Almost all students do intend to continue studies at a university level, but most students were ambiguous as to whether they would continue studying French as a language, or other subjects through the medium of French after high school.

CONFIDENCE

Both Grade 7 and Grade 10 students feel they can speak, understand, and read French quite well; however, Grade 10 students are slightly less confident than Grade 7 students about their ability to write in French. At Grade 10, Late Immersion students report less confidence than those students who have been in Immersion programs for longer periods.

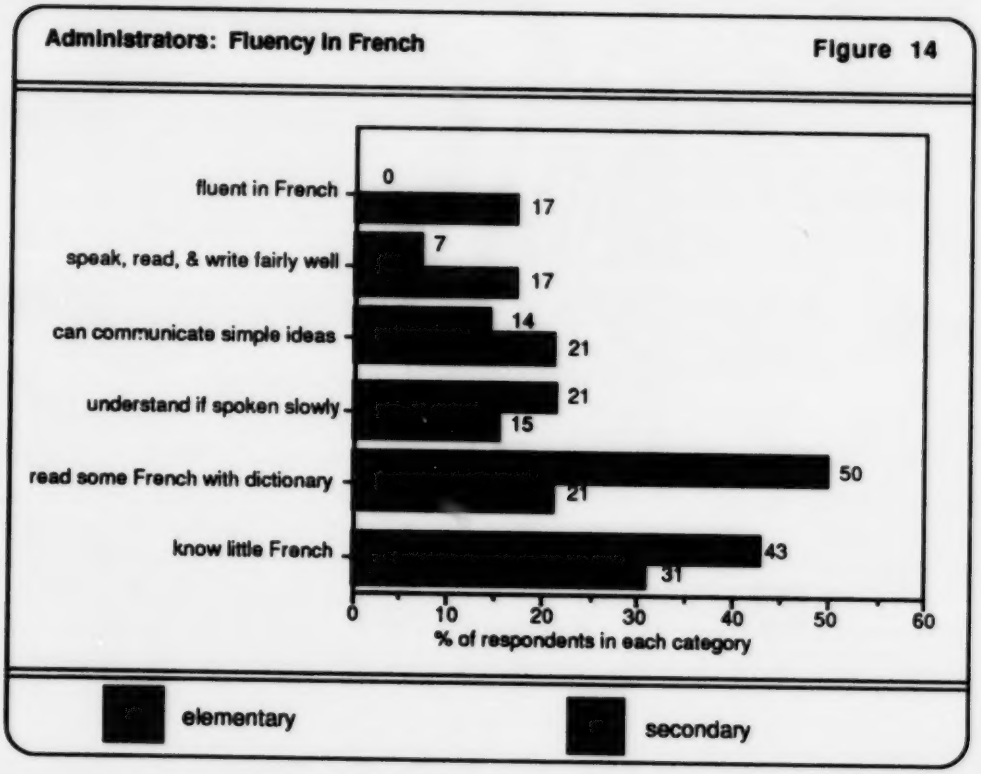
Confidence with French is correlated with some achievement scales. At Grade 7, confidence is associated with spelling ability. More students who can spell well in French have high confidence about their overall French ability. Spelling words correctly is easily discernible by pupils; being good at it doubtlessly inspires self-confidence and may assist in the student's perception of his or her ability to impose order on the language.

At Grade 10, confidence correlates with both the total reading and listening achievement scores. Overall, those students with high levels of confidence have higher reading and listening scores. From these overall scores, listening vocabulary is the sub-scale with the highest correlation to confidence. This is hardly surprising, for the possession of an adequate vocabulary is one of the surest ways to feel confident in a language.

PART 5 TEACHER AND ADMINISTRATOR INFORMATION

Principals and teachers of French Immersion programs reported their perceptions of various program features. These focused on a limited number of program characteristics and the adequacy of support services, materials, and professional training and development. Their responses describe heterogeneous activities which vary tremendously in terms of time-on-task in French, availability of support staff, and subjects taught in French at the secondary level.

A large number of administrators of French Immersion programs are not, themselves, proficient in the French language. Although elementary principals rate themselves generally as more fluent than their secondary counterparts, half consider themselves to have relatively poor skills in French. Furthermore, it is interesting that principals who do not rank themselves as competent in French also do not see a need to improve their competency in French, especially at the secondary level. Whereas 29% of elementary principals seek further French language training, 40% seek French Immersion administrative training. Likewise, 21% of secondary principals seek French language training and 43% seek French Immersion administrative training.

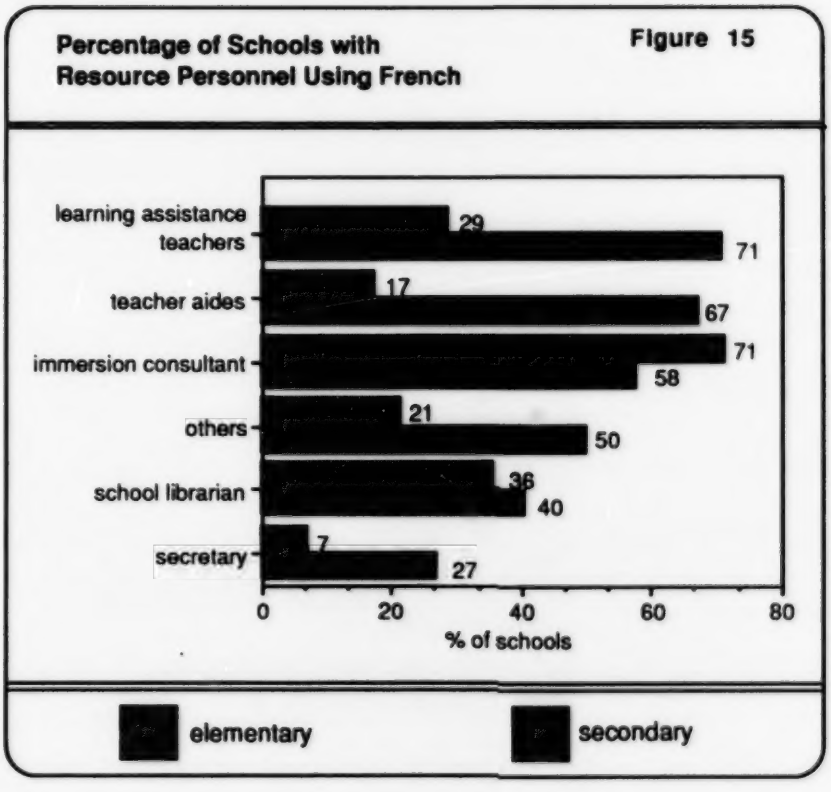


N.B. Some administrators responded positively to more than one of the above items.

Although there is a considerable range of class time spent in French (particularly within the elementary grades where French instructional time ranges from 20 - 100% of class time), there is evidence of a general pattern of less intensive French programming in the senior grades. The average percentage of time spent in French for Late Immersion pupils drops in Grade 7 to a proportion which is similar to that for Early Immersion pupils. Late Immersion pupils then go on to secondary school with Early Immersion pupils to take a variety of courses in French as well as in English.

Administrators of elementary schools report generally better personnel resources than secondary school administrators. More than two-thirds of the elementary schools report that Learning Assistance is available in French. This represents an attempt to provide French Immersion programs to more than just those students who are academically competent. Slightly less than one-third of secondary schools report that Learning Assistance is available in French.

Percentage of Schools with Resource Personnel Using French **Figure 15**

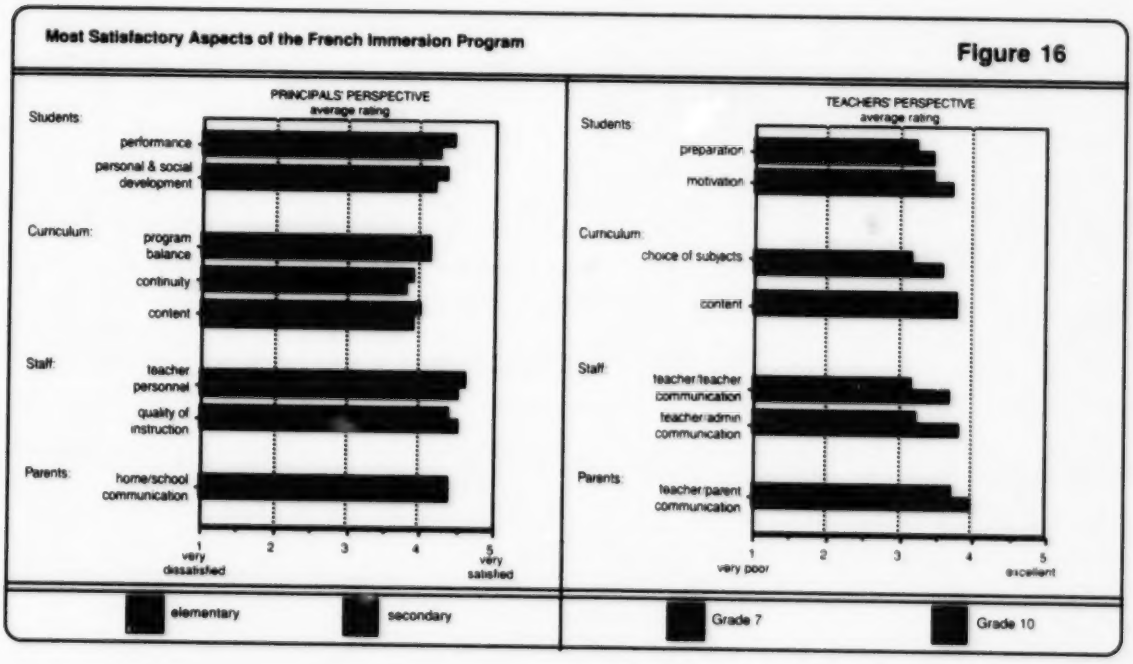


The number and percentage of pupils leaving the program is higher at the secondary level than at the elementary level. The number of elementary pupils leaving is about 2% of the average French Immersion enrollment, while the number of secondary pupils leaving each year is 9% of the average secondary enrollment. Low achievement is one of the prime reasons noted by principals for

students leaving French Immersion programs. Students report concerns about their difficulty maintaining academic standards in French Immersion programs.

Principals report more satisfaction with French Immersion programs than do teachers, and Grade 7 teachers are more positive than teachers at Grade 10. Although principals and teachers responded to different questions, the results can be grouped into similar categories. Both teachers and principals rated parent communications as one of the most positive aspects of their involvement with French Immersion. This was combined with highly satisfactory ratings of the students, curriculum, and school staff.

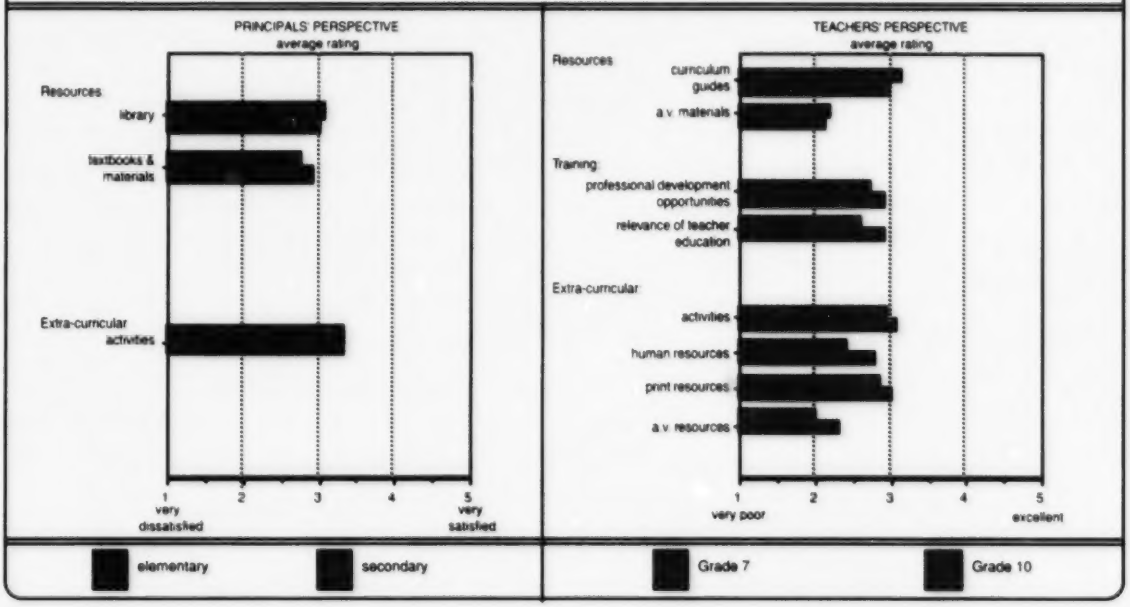
Most Satisfactory Aspects of the French Immersion Program **Figure 16**



The features which promote the greatest concern and least satisfaction are resources, training, and provision of extra-curricular activities in French. These are the same sources of dissatisfaction as were noted in the 1987 Assessment. The most emphatic need reported by teachers is for improved professional development activities relating to French Immersion programs. Teachers report that their teacher education programs poorly prepared them for teaching in Immersion settings. Also, experienced French Immersion teachers indicate a serious need for advanced methodology courses in various subjects.

Although the administrators were not directly asked about their satisfaction with training, only one-third of the principals report receiving in-service training in the administration of French Immersion schools. Both principals and teachers want more in-service programs for new teachers, and regional rather than district programs because of the small French Immersion staff in most districts.

Most Unsatisfactory Aspects of the French Immersion Program **Figure 17**



Generally, principals like the French Immersion programs which they are supervising, and there exists a remarkable optimism about French Immersion on the part of the teachers. On the other hand, administrators also disclose serious concerns about the lack of funding for library materials, the continuity of curriculum, and the looming lack of qualified teachers.

Teachers want a greater say in the selection of teaching materials and in the development of curriculum guides. Teachers want resource books that are clearer and more specific. They are demanding a significant increase in the supply of audio-visual materials to enrich their classroom teaching in French. Many teachers claim to lack access to informed or interested consultants and administrators and to appropriate and sufficient resources. Because of these shortcomings, teachers generally express an urgent need to increase the amount of time available to work with colleagues to prepare and share teaching materials, to compare programs, and to exchange ideas or strategies.

PART 6 RECOMMENDATIONS

The recommendations presented here were formulated by the Contract Team and are based on the results described in this report. In developing the recommendations, the Contract Team also considered suggestions and responses from educators who participated in the Assessment as members of the Interpretation Panels and marking committees.

It is recommended that those involved in education in British Columbia direct attention to the following needs:

1. Broaden the French environment for students in French Immersion programs through:
   - the design and implementation of specific activities (socio-cultural, drama, radio, newspapers) to encourage students to use French outside the classroom in a more casual environment;
   - the expansion of libraries to include current and interesting informal French print materials (newspapers, magazines, T.V. guides, comic books, etc.) to encourage students to read in French for pleasure;
   - inviting native French-speaking resource people from the community to participate as guests to interact in French with the students in the French Immersion program;
   - actively encouraging students with in-class assignments or activities that require listening to French radio or watching French television.

2. Expand students' exposure to varied writing formats, tasks, or exercises. Specifically, it is recommended that the program should:
   - encourage communicative-type writing activities and provide training and resources for teachers in this area;
   - encourage the use of 'dictées à trous' (fill in the blank dictation) based on communicative content;
   - provide additional opportunities to the Immersion pupils to write for a wider variety of purposes, especially in editing and revision.

3. Expand the resources available for, and increase curriculum emphasis on listening skills. Audio and video listening activities should be developed to:
   - provide a variety of spoken forms and styles;
   - reflect authentic Francophone speakers.

4. Emphasize the development of effective reading strategies by providing more classroom practice with:
   - inferential questions based on reading passages;
   - critical thinking skills in relation to reading.

5. Develop effective strategies to systematically correct the frequent errors made by Immersion students when speaking French. These should include:
   - an increase in opportunities for students to speak the French language in communicative situations;
   - more classroom practice in the use of oral links and joiners when speaking French;
   - the development of classroom testing instruments and related training to measure student performance in spoken French.

6. Unify approaches in regard to French instruction in British Columbia by:
   - exposing students to a more standardized variety of reading materials so that they read the same types of literature;
   - integrating the listening comprehension and speaking components in a regular manner for classroom practice;
   - encouraging school districts to produce specific goals for French Immersion education;
   - ensuring that future Provincial Assessments correlate the variations in French instructional time with variations in the mastery of French.

7. Allocate resources to ensure continuation and improvements in the French Immersion programming. Notably:
   - provide professional development activities for principals to improve their administrative skills vis-à-vis the Immersion program (particularly in the area of assessing French instructional situations);
   - design and offer courses in different regions throughout British Columbia in various subject areas and teaching strategies related to Immersion. Courses or workshops should deal with error analysis and corrective teaching, teaching of oral French and French Immersion, evaluation of oral and written performance, and the teaching of listening skills;
   - develop practical videos on the above topics for provincial distribution;
   - obtain software in French to use with computers;
   - increase learning assistance services at both the elementary and secondary levels;
   - increase funding to support French library resources, particularly at the secondary level.

8. Conduct further research and evaluation to:
   - undertake a comprehensive error analysis of the writing obtained from the 1988 Provincial Assessment to generate practical suggestions and materials for teachers to use in the classroom;
   - examine the student drop-out situation and provide feedback to administrators and teachers as to the measures to be taken to encourage students to remain in the Immersion program;
   - develop specific test items in the four basic skill areas with suggestions for use by teachers in their classrooms.

APPENDIX A

SUMMARY OF RESULTS FROM THE 1987 FRENCH IMMERSION ASSESSMENT

Results of the 1987 Assessment indicated:

- adequate growth in reading in French;
- adequate performance in listening and speaking at Grade 7. Pupils at this grade compared favorably with a grade peer group of Francophone Manitobans in regard to quality of discussion and description; they performed less well in regard to fluency, pronunciation, and oral usage;
- superior performance by Early Immersion pupils compared to Late Immersion pupils at Grade 7 on measures of French reading, listening, and aspects of speaking;
- that in earlier Provincial Assessments in English of reading, science and mathematics, French Immersion students' achievement was as high or higher than that of students in the regular English program;
- dissatisfaction on the part of teachers and administrators with aspects of the program such as availability of French supplementary readers, in-service training and support services (e.g., curriculum consultants);
- positive attitudes by pupils towards their involvement in the program and their perceptions of their facility in French.

APPENDIX B : PROCEDURES

Overview

The 1988 Assessment of French Immersion Programs in B.C. was a combined project of the Modern Languages and Multicultural Programs Branch and the Student Assessment Branch of the Ministry of Education. These branches convened an Advisory Committee, Review and Interpretation Panels, and contracted a Research Contract Team to conduct the Assessment.

The Advisory Committee was composed of teachers and administrators from schools in several districts, members of the Contract Team, and Ministry personnel. This Committee provided guidance and direction to the Contract Team throughout the Assessment and assisted with Review and Interpretation Panels.

The Contract Team was responsible for constructing tests and questionnaires, marking the written-expression and speaking components, and preparing a technical report for the Ministry.

The Review Panels were composed of teachers responsible for reviewing materials and recommending changes to the evaluation instruments. The Interpretation Panels, which were composed of parents, teachers, administrators, and trustees, determined acceptable and desirable standards of student performance and evaluated the students' results in light of these standards.

The Assessment Instruments

Grade 7 Writing: The Grade 7 Writing Assessment consisted of two booklets divided into six sections using both sentence completion and open-ended response formats. Questions were designed to evaluate spelling, verb usage, sentence structure, and overall expression.

Grade 10 Reading, Listening, and Speaking: The Grade 10 Assessment consisted of three distinct formats: one each for reading, listening, and speaking. One booklet was prepared to assess reading. Passages of varying length were followed by four to six multiple-choice questions. For listening, all questions were presented by voice or on a cassette tape recorder; pupils responded by selecting the correct response from a list of possible choices contained in a booklet opened before them. Speaking was assessed by taped individual interviews. Structured directions were given for students to describe one of eight pictures, and to express an opinion from one of six topics.

Student Questionnaires: A questionnaire to evaluate student attitudes and provide background information prefaced the first booklet at Grade 7, and the listening booklet at Grade 10. An identical questionnaire was used at both grade levels and included questions on the following topics:

Format	Measurement Goal
Likert scale	• attitudes -value of French -plans to use French -parental support -confidence
open-ended	• general attitude
multiple-choice	• student background -identifying information -historical information -language, gender, entry level -decision to take part in Immersion -leisure activities in French -future plans -disadvantages of French Immersion -opportunities for speaking French

Teacher and Principal Questionnaires: One administrator questionnaire was sent to each school and one teacher questionnaire was sent to each French Immersion class along with the assessment booklets.

The teacher questionnaire was designed to elicit opinions about the efficacy of program material, adequacy of communication with staff, degree of pupil motivation, availability of school and extracurricular resources, and utility of in-service training. A five-point Likert scale was used for most questions and a section was provided for comments.

The questionnaire developed for principals focused on characteristics of the programs, students, staffing, and resources. Also a five-point Likert scale was used to assess satisfaction with various facets of the program, and an open-ended section was designed to elicit comments, perceived difficulties, and suggestions.

Sampling

All students at both grade levels wrote the background questionnaire. At Grade 7, all students wrote the writing measure; at Grade 10, all students wrote the listening and reading measures. A sample of 94 Grade 10 students was selected randomly from all areas of the province to participate in the Speaking Assessment. All teachers and administrators of French Immersion were provided with a questionnaire at the time of the student assessment.

In June 1988, a validation sample of approximately 200 Grades 7 and 10 Quebec Francophone students was assessed. Students replicated the assessment study done in B.C. The total numbers of students, teachers, and administrators involved are listed below:

		No. of participants	Participation rate
Grade 7 Writing	Early	862	97.7 %
	Late	711	97.1 %
	Quebec	114	-- -
Grade 10 Reading and Listening	Immersion	415	82.0 %
	Quebec	99	-- -
Grade 10 Speaking	Immersion	94	22.7 % *
	Quebec	25	25.0 % *
Administrator	Elementary	52	88.1 %
	Secondary	14	82.4 %
Teacher	Elementary	69	84.1 %
	Secondary	19	80.6 %

* These figures represent sampling rates.

Administration and Scoring

Administration of the Assessment: Classroom teachers, hired examiners, and members of the contract team administered the measures. For the Speaking measures, examiners were trained by the Contract Team.

Scoring: Committees of teachers scored the responses to open-ended and composition questions. Multiple-choice responses were scored by computer.

Responses to the individually administered Speaking Assessments were scored by members of the contract team. Five teams of two teacher-examiners worked together in the following manner:

1. the audio cassette was played;
2. independently, each examiner assessed each part by completing a scoring form with the 8 three-point scales; concrete criteria were listed to guide the examiners;
3. the results were compared and discussed;
4 if there was a disagreement of more than 2 points, the cassette was played once again and reassessed;
5. the average of the two independent results was recorded as the final mark on a possible total of 24 points.

APPENDIX C: INTERPRETATION PANEL RATINGS

Interpretation Panel Ratings of Student Achievement

Grade 7 Writing Sub-scores

Domain	Early Immersion Ratings *	Late Immersion Ratings *
Spelling:		
semantic	S	S
grammatical	M	M
Verb Use:		
conjugation	S	VS
tense and form	S	S
Sentence Construction:		
completion	S	VS
enrichment	S	S
Composition:		
paragraph	S	VS
cartoon phrasing	S	VS

Grade 10 Reading, Listening, and Speaking Sub-scores

Domain	Immersion Ratings*
Reading:	
literal	VS
inferential	S
critical	S
Listening	
vocabulary	VS
semantics	VS
following directions	S
comprehension	S
Speaking:	
description	VS
personal opinion	ST

*Interpretation Panel ratings on a five-point scale:
ST- strong, VS- very satisfactory, S- satisfactory, M- marginal, W-weak.

Assessment Update

FCG 124

RESULTS OF THE 1988 FRENCH IMMERSION ASSESSMENT

September, 1990

In May 1988, an evaluation of French Immersion classes in B.C. was undertaken as part of the Provincial Learning Assessment Program. Early and Late Immersion students were assessed for writing performance in Grade 7 and for reading, listening, and speaking performances in Grade 10. A comparison was made to the performance of a group of Quebec Francophone students. B.C. students' attitudes and background characteristics were assessed in both grades. French Immersion teachers and administrators were surveyed about program and resource issues.

HIGHLIGHTS

GRADE 7 WRITING

- About 9 out of 10 students can write a short composition with some detail, organization, and originality.
- In spite of their short time in French Immersion, it appears that Late Immersion students learn quickly to write in French.
- Immersion students receive higher scores than Francophone students from Quebec on punctuation and sentence enrichment.
- Spelling causes the greatest difficulty for students.
- Vocabulary usage is the most noticeable difference between the writing of Immersion students and that of native French speakers.

GRADE 10 READING, LISTENING, AND SPEAKING

- When reading, 8 out of 10 students can grasp information which is explicitly stated and are able to make inferences. Approximately 7 out of 10 students can make judgements about what is read.
- Nine out of ten students can listen to series of words each presented in the context of a sentence and from a choice of drawings correctly identify all of them .
- The students' speech in French is characterized by certain English traits, but it is clear and comprehensible.
- Four out of ten students achieve full points for pronunciation.
- Early Immersion students have better listening and speaking results than Late Immersion students. Reading results are similar for the two streams.
- Female students read better than male students. There are no notable gender differences for listening and speaking performances.
- The overall reading performance of B.C. students is somewhat lower than that of Francophone students (approximately 10%). Their listening and speaking performances are considerably lower than that of Francophone students.

· MINISTRY OF EDUCATION ·

Province of British Columbia

FRENCH ASSESSMENT

STUDENT ATTITUDES AND BACKGROUND

- Seven out of ten Grade 7 students, and eight out of ten Grade 10 students gave very high ratings to the value of studying French. Students report positive attitudes about French Immersion programs.
- Most students do not use French outside of the classroom. Approximately 7 out of 10 students report little to no opportunity to speak French outside of the classroom.
- Grade 7 students who spell well have more confidence in their French.
- Grade 10 students who have good listening vocabularies have more confidence in their French.
- Grade 10 Early Immersion students are more confident about their French than are Late Immersion students.
- More than 9 out of 10 of all Immersion students intend to go to university.

TEACHER AND ADMINISTRATOR SURVEY

- The amount of time students spend in French varies from as little as 20% to as much as 100% of class time.
- Almost 2 out of 10 elementary principals and none of the secondary principals surveyed consider themselves to be fluent in the French language.
- There is a larger proportion of resource personnel and learning assistance teachers who can use French at the elementary level than at the secondary level.
- Teachers and administrators are most satisfied with student performance and attitudes, curriculum balance and content, staff relationships and competence, and communication with parents.
- Teachers and administrators are most dissatisfied with the provision of extra-curricular activities in French for students and in-service training on French Immersion programs for staff.

The 1988 French Immersion Assessment was designed to investigate the following questions:

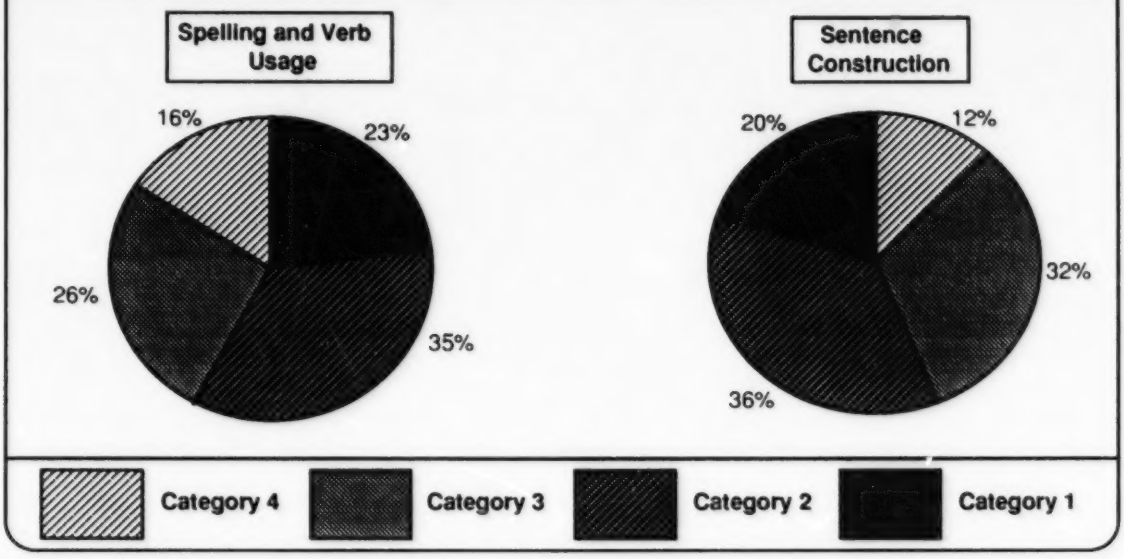
- To what extent are students in Grades 7 and 10 French Immersion programs achieving the goals and objectives of the language arts component of the programs?
- What are the competencies in French Language Arts of students in Grades 7 and 10 Immersion programs?
- What attitudes do French Immersion students hold toward French Immersion programs?
- What are the characteristics of students in French Immersion programs?
- How do teachers and administators feel about the French Immersion programs and the instructional materials available?
- What recommendations are suggested by the collected information?

GRADE 7 WRITING ASSESSMENT : CATEGORIES OF STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

The descriptors of what the students can do provide the clearest definition of each achievement category.

Overview of the Grade 7 Assessment Results
% of Students by Achievement Category

Figure 1



Spelling and Verb Usage Achievement Categories : The following table shows the percentage of students for each achievement category and what each of these groups of students can do.

Students can also do everything listed above their own category.

Category 1 23%	In the context of a dictée, students can spell some high-frequency words that have only one form and also words that are spelled similarly in English.
Category 2 35%	Students can spell many high-frequency words with invariable spellings in the context of a dictée and can also conjugate some verbs in the present tense and most high-frequency verbs in the passé composé.
Category 3 26%	Students can spell many regular and irregular verbs in the present tense in the context of a dictée and can also conjugate verbs in the present and some verbs in the imparfait.
Category 4 16%	Students can spell past and present verb forms, words which require conventional agreement for masculine/feminine and singular/plural, and also complex words such as qu'est-ce qui in the context of a dictée. Students can also conjugate verbs in the passé composé, futur simple, and imparfait.

Sentence Construction Achievement Categories: The following table shows the percentage of students for each achievement category and what each of these groups of students can do.

Students can also add descriptive words to answer questions listed above their own category.

Category 1 20%	Students can sometimes *write a complete sentence of eight to ten words with* three or more errors.
Category 2 36%	Students write complete sentences of eight to ten words with two or more errors. Students add descriptive words with few errors to a sentence to answer the questions when, where, with whom, and to whom.
Category 3 32%	Students write complete sentences of eight to ten words with at least one error. Students add descriptive words with no more than one error to a sentence to answer the questions from where and why.
Category 4 12%	Students write complete sentences of eight to ten words with no more than one error. Students add descriptive words with no more than one error to a sentence to answer the questions when, how, and what kind.

Composition Achievement Categories: For the Grade 7 compositions, teachers assigned ratings of 0 to 5 to the students' paragraphs and cartoons for a number of attributes: content, vocabulary, sentence structure, punctuation, and spelling. The type of writing that is characteristic of the scale points is described below. The percentage of students whose compositions fit into each achievement category is shown to the left of each set of descriptors.

0 and 1: 12%	For those students who attempted the task, the composition is off topic or unclear. The sentences are simple and the vocabulary is limited and repetitive. There are several Anglicisms and numerous grammatical errors.
2 and 3: 49%	The topic is approached in some detail. The composition has some organization with one or two ideas. It has a certain originality and includes a few interesting details. The sentences may be somewhat varied and complex with some Anglicisms, or they may be simple and correct. The vocabulary may be somewhat descriptive and original with several Anglicisms or weak and repetitive with few Anglicisms. There are several grammatical errors.
4 and 5: 39%	The topic is dealt with in a well-organized manner with interesting ideas that are expressed with originality and supported by details. The student shows a good understanding of the structure of the French language by using complex sentences or by using inversion of subject pronoun and verb in questions and also relative pronouns such as dont and auquel. The vocabulary is precise, descriptive, and original. There are few errors or Anglicisms.

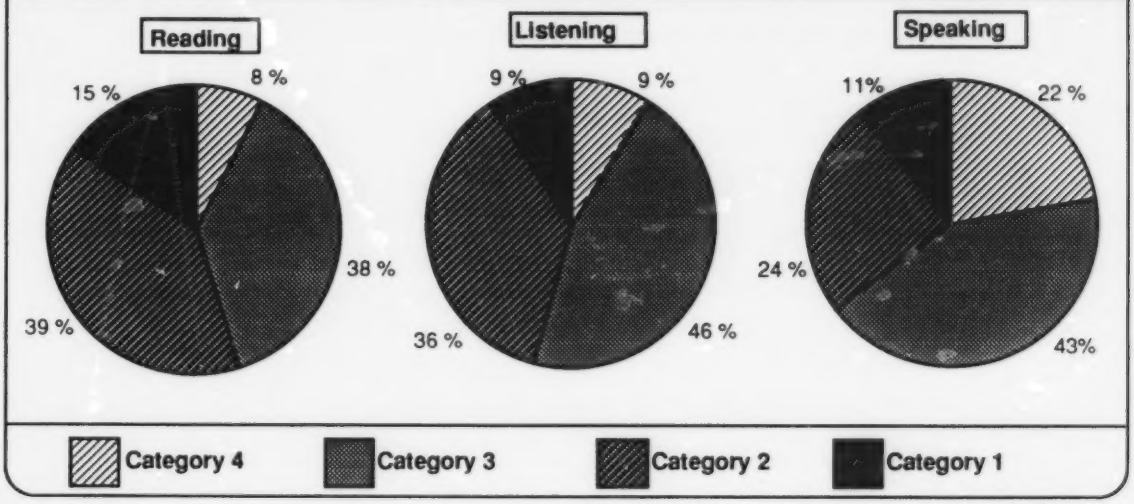
GRADE 10 READING, LISTENING, AND SPEAKING ASSESSMENT

CATEGORIES OF STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

The descriptors of what the students can do provide the clearest definition of each achievement category.

Overview of the Grade 10 Assessment Results
% of Students by Achievement Category

Figure 2



Achievement Categories for Reading: The following table shows the percentage of the students for each achievement category and what each of these groups of students can do.

Students can also do everything listed above their own category.

Students can read a variety of short prose passages and poems and answer questions described below:

Category 1: 15%
- answer a few questions on explicitly stated information.
- infer the topic of a poem and identify a short story as being a fantasy.

Category 2 39%
- answer most questions on explicitly stated information.
- understand the main idea of a paragraph and identify cause and effect.
- infer differences between two story settings and infer the meaning of a poetic metaphor.

Category 3: 38%
- answer the vast majority of questions on explicitly stated information.
- understand character motivation when it is clearly portrayed.
- infer the main idea of a short essay, probable cause of stated events, and personification in a poem.

Category 4: 8%
- answer all questions on explicitly stated information.
- infer author's message, nuance in synonyms, and reference of a simile.
- classify images described in a poem.
- recognize underlying theme and understand unstated suggestions.
- differentiate between kinds of writing (satirical, symbolic, etc.)

Achievement Categories for Listening: The following table shows the percentage of the students for each achievement category and what each of these groups of students can do.

Students can also do everything listed above their own category.

Students in the four achievement categories were able to:

Category 1
9%

- listen to a series of isolated nouns and from a choice of drawings identify a small number of the more common concrete nouns correctly.
- listen to a series of words in the context of a sentence and from a choice of drawings identify most of them correctly.
- listen to a series of simple directions to be carried out with pencil and paper and perform very few of them successfully.
- listen to a series of short passages recorded from French Canadian radio and answer correctly a few simple questions to test understanding (such as identify the season during which a weather announcement was recorded and recognize the time that a show is to start from a publicity announcement).

Category 2
36%

- listen to a series of isolated nouns and from a choice of drawings identify half of the nouns correctly (mostly high-frequency, concrete nouns).
- listen to a series of words in the context of a sentence and from a choice of drawings identify all of them correctly.
- listen to a series of simple directions to be carried out with pencil and paper and perform a few of them successfully.
- listen to a series of short passages recorded from French Canadian radio and answer correctly about a third of the questions to test understanding (the questions tend to be asked in a slight rewording of the original passage).

Category 3
46%

- listen to a series of isolated nouns and from a choice of drawings identify just about all of the nouns correctly (including a number of difficult, abstract nouns).
- listen to a series of simple directions to be carried out with pencil and paper and perform just about all of them successfully.
- listen to a series of short passages recorded from French Canadian radio and answer correctly slightly more than half of the questions to test understanding (these questions tend to be among the longer ones and many of them are asked in a rewording of the original passage).

Category 4
9%

- listen to a series of isolated nouns and from a choice of drawings identify all of the nouns correctly.
- listen to a series of simple directions to be carried out with pencil and paper and perform all of them successfully.
- listen to a series of short passages recorded from French Canadian radio and answer correctly all of the questions to test understanding (even questions that are long and complex and require a lengthy period of concentration).

Achievement Categories for Speaking: Two oral tests were performed. Students described what they saw in a picture and they also expressed an opinion. The speech was characterized as follows for the four achievement categories. The percentage of the students for each achievement category is listed to the left of each set of descriptors.

Category 1:
11%

- the speaking tasks are attempted, but vocabulary is limited and repetitive with a few descriptive words and many errors and Anglicisms.
- verbs are usually confined to the present tense.
- speech is confusing and pronunciation is rarely clear.

Category 2:
24%

- vocabulary is sometimes appropriate with several errors and Anglicisms.
- moderate variety of verbs and tenses with frequent errors.
- organization and pronunciation are sometimes coherent and clear.

Category 3
43%

- vocabulary is usually appropriate with occasional errors and Anglicisms.
- moderate variety of verbs and tenses with few errors.
- often coherent organization and usually clear pronunciation.

Category 4
22%

- wide variety of verbs, tenses, and vocabulary with few errors and few Anglicisms.
- coherent organization and clear pronunciation.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The recommendations presented here were formulated by the Contract Team and are based on the results described in this report. In developing the recommendations, the Contract Team also considered suggestions and responses from educators who participated in the Assessment as members of the Interpretation Panels and marking committees.

It is recommended that those involved in education in British Columbia direct attention to the following needs:

1. Broaden the French environment for students in French Immersion programs through:

    - the design and implementation of specific activities (socio-cultural, drama, radio, newspapers) to encourage students to use French outside the classroom in a more casual environment;
    - the expansion of libraries to include current and interesting informal French print materials (newspapers, magazines, T.V. guides, comic books, etc.) to encourage students to read in French for pleasure;
    - inviting native French-speaking resource people from the community to participate as guests to interact in French with the students in the French Immersion program;
    - actively encouraging students with in-class assignments or activities that require listening to French radio or watching French television.

2. Expand students' exposure to varied writing formats, tasks, or exercises. Specifically, it is recommended to:

    - encourage communicative-type writing activities and provide training and resources for teachers in this area;
    - encourage the use of 'dictées à trous' (fill in the blank dictation) based on communicative content;
    - provide additional opportunities to the Immersion pupils to write for a wider variety of purposes, especially in editing and revision.

3. Expand the resources available for, and increase curriculum emphasis on listening skills. Audio and video listening activities should be developed to:

    - provide a variety of spoken forms and styles;
    - reflect authentic Francophone speakers.

4. Emphasize the development of effective reading strategies by providing more classroom practice with:

    - inferential questions based on reading passages;
    - critical thinking skills in relation to reading.

5. Develop effective strategies to systematically correct the frequent errors made by Immersion students when speaking French. These should include:

    - an increase in opportunities for students to speak the French language in communicative situations;
    - more classroom practice in the use of oral links and joiners when speaking French;
    - the development of classroom testing instruments and related training to measure student performance in spoken French.

6. Unify approaches in regard to French instruction in British Columbia by:

   - exposing students to a more standardized variety of reading materials so that they read the same types of literature;
   - integrating the listening comprehension and speaking components in a regular manner for classroom practice;
   - encouraging school districts to produce specific goals for French Immersion education;
   - ensuring that future Provincial Assessments correlate the variations in French instructional time with variations in the mastery of French.

7. Allocate resources to ensure continuation and improvements in the French Immersion programming. Notably:

   - provide professional development activities for principals to improve their administrative skills vis-à-vis the Immersion program (particularly in the area of assessing French instructional situations);
   - design and offer courses in different regions throughout British Columbia in various subject areas and teaching strategies related to Immersion. Courses or workshops should deal with error analysis and corrective teaching, teaching of oral French and French Immersion, evaluation of oral and written performance and the teaching of listening skills;
   - develop practical videos on the above topics for provincial distribution;
   - obtain software in French to use with computers;
   - increase learning assistance services at both the elementary and secondary levels;
   - increase funding to support French library resources, particularly at the secondary level.

8. Conduct further research and evaluation to:

   - undertake a comprehensive error analysis of the writing obtained from the 1988 Provincial Assessment to generate practical suggestions and materials for teachers to use in the classroom;
   - examine the student drop-out situation and provide feedback to administrators and teachers as to the measures to be taken to encourage students to remain in the Immersion program;
   - develop specific test items in the four basic skill areas with suggestions for use by teachers in their classrooms.

CONDUCT OF THE ASSESSMENT

The Assessment was conducted by a team under contract to the Student Assessment Branch. The Contract Team was headed by Dr. Nick Ardanaz from the University of British Columbia and was guided by an Advisory Committee of teachers and ministry representatives. The initial pool of achievement items and the questionnaires were assembled and constructed by the Contract Team during the summer and fall of 1987, and piloting was done during the fall of 1987. Review Panels of Immersion teachers assessed the appropriateness of the questions for the final forms. Interpretation Panels met in July 1988 to interpret the provincial results.

Contract Team

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Two additional reports on the results of this Assessment are available. The Provincial Report gives a more detailed presentation and discussion of the results of the Assessement. Technical information is provided in the Technical Report. Additional copies of these reports are available in limited numbers from:

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